

KATHARINE K. RUSSELL.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 537.]

MARCH 30, 1860.

Mr. HALL, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the petition of Katharine K. Russell, widow of the late Joseph Pynchon Russell, then an assistant surgeon in the United States army, having had the same under consideration, make the following report :

That the husband of the petitioner entered the army in the medical staff in 1812, and continued in the constant discharge of his duties as a medical officer till the time of his death, which occurred in New York, at Fort Columbus, Governor's island, on the 19th day of September, 1849.

It appears from the certificates of the surgeons in attendance upon Surgeon Russell during his last sickness, which was verified by a *post mortem* examination, that he came to his death from over exertion and exposure in meeting the demands made upon him in the discharge of his arduous duties while in an enfeebled state of health. The certificates are hereto annexed, marked, respectively, A and B.

A.

Copy of the statement of George H. Batchelder, M. D., of the city of New York, respecting the causes of death of the late Joseph P. Russell, assistant surgeon United States army.

NEW YORK, January 16, 1855.

In the month of August, 1849, my professional services were requested at Fort Columbus by Doctor Mower, the medical purveyor of the United States army, to relieve Doctor J. P. Russell, the surgeon of the post, then laboring under ill health induced by excessive fatigue and over exertion in performing the arduous duties incidental to the station during the preceding two years. At the time of my undertaking the medical department Doctor Russell did not appear to be suffering under any special disease, but was in a state of physical and mental depression, which required absolute rest for ultimate recovery.

While in this condition an order came from the surgeon general, directing Doctor Russell to inspect the work at Bedlow's island. The weather was inclement, and the inspection of the buildings, out-houses, sewers, &c., at the fort fatiguing and unwholesome, in consequence of bad condition of the drains. The day after this tour of duty Doctor Russell was taken sick; at first no serious fears were entertained, but the symptoms soon became alarming, and Doctors Mower and Simpson, of the army, and Doctors Batchelder and Buckley, of New York city, were called in consultation. The disease, however, progressed regularly to a fatal termination in spite of all efforts to the contrary. The lungs appeared to be principally affected, although the precise nature of the case was not satisfactorily made out during life. A *post mortem* examination was instituted, and the true cause of death ascertained to be owing to the presence of a large abscess at the base of each lung, which had burst into the pleura. The inferior portions of the lungs were loaded with pus, and the superior portions in that state called red hepatization. The inciting cause of disease, which terminated fatally, was undoubtedly the tour of inspection on Bedlow's island, which acted unfavorably upon the system already enfeebled by overwork.

GEORGE H. BATCHELDER.

B.

Copy of a certificate of Harvey Brown, lieutenant colonel United States army, in relation to the death of the late Joseph P. Russell, assistant surgeon United States army.

I certify that on or about the 1st of September, 1849, I being then in command of the principal recruiting depot at Fort Columbus, accompanied Brigadier General Garland, superintendent of the recruiting service, with Assistant Surgeon Russell, on an official visit to Fort Wood, Bedlow's island, for the purpose of inspecting that post preparatory to the transfer of the depot there; that in the course of our inspection we entered two or three subterranean vaults; that Doctor Russell remained in one of them a considerable time; that they were very wet and damp; that after a day or two Doctor Russell was taken sick, which sickness terminated in death in about a week or ten days; that I was almost constantly with him during his illness, was present at his death, and at a *post mortem* examination of the body; and I have no doubt but that his death was immediately caused by his visit to the vaults at Fort Wood, he being at the time in delicate health, and such I believe to have been the opinion of his attending surgeon, Mower.

HARVEY BROWN,
Lieut. Col. U. S. Army.

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA,
November 2, 1855.

In view of the foregoing facts your committee report the accompanying bill.